683 nude and bloody, was found in the middle of the grounds at daybreak, and there remained exposed until evening. All passed by it in silence and without a complaint.

There are many other such cases, for unfortunately executions on account of witchcraft are still frequent. It is said that in those times when Caru-Sacaebê lived among the Mundurucu, there existed no witchcraft and no sorcerers.

Indeed, the criminal code of the Mundurucu is based exclusively upon this.

There is no record of one Mundurucu ever being killed by another except on account of witchcraft. When violent hatred erupts between two Indians who inhabit the same village -- and this is extremely rare -- one of the two merely takes down his hammock, goes to some other village which attracts his fancy, chooses a place in the ekçá, and remains there as long as he pleases.

XVI

Social feelings among the Mundurucu -- The family -- The characteristic painting pattern of the tribe.

619 A remarkably strong social spirit, or indeed national spirit, binds the individual members and the villages of this tribe, preserving, if I may say so, the autonomy of the Mundurucu republic in a wilderness which lies beyond the contact and influence of our civilization. [112]

It is no cause for wonder that the Quechua of the Andes, herding as they did vast flocks of llama and alpaca and cultivating in large quantities the potato native to their mountains, should have founded great population centers and established a powerful monarchy. An agricultural and pastoral people, they possessed those elements necessary to live in the midst of plenty and to develop their intellectual and moral qualities under the stimulus of life in society.

Although they go entirely naked, they carefully avoid any postures which might appear indecent, and this to such an extent that no one notices it when they go through those trying periods peculiar to their sex.

I shall now relate one of the instances of jealousy, for I believe that such first-hand episodes provide a more vivid picture of the uses, customs and feelings of a people than any general description might do.

The Indian girl Sebastiana, already referred to above, was married in Acupari. One day a young man came to her and said: "Leave your husband, who is not a good hunter, and come with me to another village." At that very moment the husband appeared, came to her, and asked her what the young man had said. The girl, embarrassed, did not know what to answer, and her husband seized a bow and chastised her severely. Yet [114] this couple were always close and loved each other, until the unfortunate circumstances which threatened her mother forced Sebastiana to flee Acupari, leaving her husband behind.

Families are very united; fathers and mothers alike are extremely fond of their children, and will face the greatest dangers to help and protect them.

I have seen sick children treated with the greatest care and dedication in the large village houses.

When a Mundurucu mentions another member of his tribe, he always uses the same expression -- "a kinsman of ours" -- to distinguish him from members of other tribes.

When these barbarians happen to meet outside their villages, in the midst of a forest or on the banks of a stream, they easily recognize each other by the paintings and tattoo marks peculiar to their tribe.

Mundurucu body painting is a remarkable thing. The designs are traced with great skill by consummate artists.

On the face and chest, numerous lozenges are drawn to perfection. The back part of the body is covered with parallel lines from the neck nearly down to the heels; the breasts, the buttocks, and the female sexual parts are painted with fanciful designs which are identical for members of the same sex.

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the clan of the man who manufactured them. If he dies or moves to another village, it is quite possible that no other man of that community will belong to the clan owning the trumpets. It is, therefore, understandable that informants were often vague when asked to explain the connection between clans and instruments. Many people believed that the trumpets had souls of their own and that these were the most important spirits resident within them. And, as has been mentioned, it was commonly thought that the playing of the instruments was pleasing to the spirit mothers of the game.

The actual function of the trumpets in present-day Mundurucú society has little to do with clanship, but much to do with the maintenance of the sharp dichotomy between the sexes. The instruments are primarily the property of the village men and are expressive of their unity and identity in the face of the women. In this connection it is significant that the villages that arose along the Cururú River have never had either the men's house or the sacred trumpets. As a corollary, the gulf between the sexes in social participation and labor that characterizes the savannah villages is lacking. On the Cururú the nuclear family is the basic social and economic unit. Men eat and sleep with their families and join their wives in tasks that would be considered degrading by a savannah dweller. But the demands of the rubber trade, combined with the covert hostility and factionalism that exist in all Mundurucú villages, are currently promoting migration from the savannah communities either to the Cururú River or to isolated residence along other streams. The end result will be the complete lapse of the sacred instruments and the men's organization.

The only other extant ceremonial is the one devoted to curing victims of soul loss. Since human souls are stolen by the spirit mothers of the game, this rite is also one of the few remaining religious acts that deals with this category of supernaturals. It is most significant that all the important means of obtaining the good will of these spirits and the increase of game have lapsed, although the Mundurucú have clung tenaciously to the technique of defending themselves against the spirits and rectifying the damage done by them. It may be said of the religion of the contemporary Mundurucú that it has retained those items that specifically protect the individual and, to a less degree the society, from harm though dropping those features that were not so immediately defensive in nature and which were more expressive of the integration and central values of the society.

To continue this line of thought, we turn to a consideration of those elements of Mundurucú religion that have maintained greatest vitality—shamanism and sorcery.[1] The two institutions are inseparable in the Mundurucú mind; the shaman cures diseases, which are invariably caused by sorcery, and the sorcerers are recruited from the ranks of the shamans. But disease, its explanation and its cure, has much greater significance than as a system of belief. Kluckhohn has shown for the Navaho that sorcery plays a vital role in the release of aggression,[2] and Beatrice Blythe Whiting's monograph *Paiute Sorcery*[3] shifts emphasis somewhat and stresses the function of sorcery as a mechanism of social control. Both of these fac-

[1] Kluckhohn, 1944.
[2] Whiting, 1950.

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tors, but primarily that of aggression release, play a part in Mundurucú sorcery also.

In a previously published work[8] I set forth the thesis that aggression cannot be tolerated in Mundurucú society because of the combination of a matrilocal residence rule and a patrilineal descent system. Under these social conditions each man has two sets of allegiances, one to his clan and the other to the household and village of his wife. Since the two do not coincide, he occupies social roles that potentially can conflict. That is, a quarrel between households or villages may well pit fellow clansmen against each other, and, correspondingly, conflict between clans can cause internal dissension within villages and even households. Open aggression is therefore avoided among the Mundurucú, and, although interpersonal and interfactional tensions abound within the group, they are generally suppressed. The feeling of horror at the outward display of hostility between men is so strong that informants were unwilling to give data upon its occurrence, although it occasionally happens.

Violence during warfare or the execution of a sorcerer, however, is thoroughly condoned. Attacks upon enemy tribes served to channel hostility upon surrogate objects outside the society and thus promoted social cohesion, but this avenue of release is no longer open. The only remaining catharsis for aggression is the practice of sorcery and the execution of suspected sorcerers. Another alternative, withdrawal from the frustrating situation, has been made possible by the general pacification of the upper Tapajós area and the consequent possibility of flight from village life. In former times it would have been most risky for an individual or family to forsake the mutual security offered by the local group, but today it is common for Mundurucú to live in the midst of the Brazilian rubber-gathering population. Even within the confines of Mundurucú territory, the tendency toward neolocal residence makes isolated or semi-isolated existence socially acceptable.

Mundurucú sorcery has a number of interesting facets. It is impossible to induce any shaman to admit the practice, but the body of detailed knowledge of witchcraft techniques suggests that it indeed exists. Granting that witchcraft is not completely a figment of the Mundurucú imagination, the practitioner undoubtedly derives considerable gratification of his antisocial inclinations. Also, the Mundurucú generally fix suspicion of sorcery upon the more deviant shamans. Thus of the two people known by me to have been suspected of witchcraft, one was a rather humorless, silent, and aloof man, and the other, although more outgoing, far outstripped the other members of the village in rubber production. The threat of sorcery accusation, it may be inferred, tends to enforce social participation and conformity.

These factors of covert release of aggression and social control are, however, applicable only to the ranks of shamans. Persons born without shamanistic powers are unable to practice witchcraft, and sorcerers do not practice on behalf of others. But the dogged persistence of belief in black magic among the members of the society at large suggests that it does perform a very vital social function. It has al-

[8] Murphy, 1957.

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ready been mentioned that depopulation, the disintegration of the social structure, and the decline of such highly valued activities as warfare and the hunt have robbed the Mundurucú of much that was vital and positive in their way of life and left them disheartened and apathetic. Frustration, in the classic paradigm, normally leads to aggression, the expression of which is forbidden in this culture. Fear of sorcery among the Mundurucú is a means of embodying and phrasing in understandable terms not only the manifold anxieties of their existence but the latent aggression that nearly all members of the society carry within them. In this connection, it will be remembered that the intrusive objects made by the sorcerer are spread abroad and are not usually directed against any one person. The sorcerer is then, as the Mundurucú say, malevolent toward society in general. This is not only logically consistent with the indiscriminate ravages of epidemic disease, but it also suggests that the accusers of the sorcerer displace generalized aggression to his person and eradicate it through his execution.

That considerable aggression is unleashed upon the executed sorcerer can be inferred from the quality of the executions and the way in which informants report them. Many, if not most, executions take place from ambush, but some are bloody affairs in which the accused is beaten to death with clubs. And the Mundurucú enthusiastically relate these episodes with obvious hatred for the victim. The men of the village of Cabruá derived evident satisfaction by pointing to a brown smear on the posts of their men's house and saying: "That is where we wiped the blood of our last sorcerer from our hands." This emotional intensity parallels that reported by Kluckhohn among the Navaho,[6] and among both peoples this is atypical behavior.

Since aggression is related not only to real interpersonal differences but to frustration and general insecurity, it should be expected that witchcraft accusations would be most common in periods of stress. This is borne out by the Mundurucú practice of refraining from direct action against the sorcerer until illness becomes severe in the community and deaths occur. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient historical material to demonstrate conclusively, as did Kluckhohn, that sorcery troubles are correlated with historical periods of crisis. The best primary source on the Mundurucú, the report of the Brazilian engineer Antonio Tocantins, in 1875, describes sorcery executions as extremely frequent and one of the major problems of the Bacabal mission.[7] But it is difficult to evaluate the significance of this data and to control all the variables in the situation without similarly complete reports from other periods. In 1875 the Mundurucú still waged war and therefore had available a means of expression of hostility which had the obvious advantage of being directed outside the society. But on the other hand, Mundurucú society was then being subjected to its greatest threat since the contact with the whites, for these were the first years of the rubber-extraction period, and the Indians themselves were becoming increasingly involved in the industry. White rubber tappers were penetrating the area in growing numbers, and the mission had just been established. In

[6] Kluckhohn, 1944, p. 56.
[7] Tocantins, 1877, pp. 107–111.

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view of the complexity of the problem and the paucity of data, however, it can only be concluded that sorcery was also common in times past. Whether or not accusations and executions have increased in number or in proportion to the number of shamans cannot be positively ascertained, but it is highly significant that the institution has been perpetuated into the present, a period that has seen the disappearance of much of Mundurucú religious activity.

It has been said that the shaman occupies a most precarious role today. The source of much of the evil threatening the group, he also is the only person who can cope with the harmful forces, and his services are in great demand. The Mundurucú are deeply concerned with illness and frequently sought relief in the medicine afforded by my wife and me and by the mission and Indian Service Post. But given their theory of disease, modern medicines were inadequate for a complete cure and were believed efficacious only in healing the damage done by supernatural agencies. The removal and destruction of the latter can only be accomplished by the shaman. The role thus has a dual function; society purges itself of repressed hostility through the imputation of malevolence to the shaman, and it is also the means by which society protects itself from the believed evil.

This dual function makes shamanism a most ambivalent practice. All but the most powerful practitioners, who usually are called upon to detect sorcerers, are in great and continued danger. The general reduction of the Mundurucú population has proportionately thinned the ranks of the shaman, and executions have further reduced their numbers. Many leave the Mundurucú country in flight from execution parties or in fear of future accusation. Others refuse to practice shamanism in the hope, often vain, that they will thus shield themselves from suspicion. The result is that many villages are without shamans, and their residents accordingly lose another motive for remaining members of nucleated communities.

The involvement of sorcery in repressed conflict may be seen through an examination of a few case histories. The instance already cited in which the village of Missão Velha split on whether to kill the accused Antonio is a case in point. Antonio was the most industrious rubber tapper of the village and was much disliked by the family of the chief. The latter group was, as in most Mundurucú villages, the strongest aggregration of kinsmen in the community, since it included not only the sons-in-law of the chief, but also his sons, who are customarily exempt from the matrilocal residence rule. Relations were strained between the chief's group and the men of many other households of the village, for the latter looked upon the chief as the appointee of the missionaries and resented the strength of his family. These dissidents sided with the condemned shaman. They were not, however, willing to court the possibility of open factional struggle by offering physical defense of Antonio, but resolved instead to leave the village.

Another case of sorcery, this time in the savannah village of Cabruá, saw the men of the village determined to kill the stepson of the chief. The latter, supported by his sons and sons-in-law, intervened, and the man's life was spared. In a

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third village, however, the power of the chief's family must have been weak, for both he and his son were slain as sorcerers by the other men of the village. The tendency for villages to fractionate because of sorcery fears and accusations is probably greater now than in the past. Not only is village cohesion in general much weaker, but the disappearance of such leadership activities as heading war parties and trading on behalf of the village as a whole has made it most difficult for the chief to obtain the consensus necessary to carrying out an execution. It must not be thought, however, that lack of unanimity in sorcerer killings indicates a decline in belief in black magic; it rather reflects distrust of the sincerity of the accusers and the existence of latent factionalism that may not be directly caused by witchcraft. But these occasions bring conflicts to a head and open breaches that are in many cases irreparable and can be resolved only by the removal of one party.

This analysis of the Mundurucú data indicates that although the institution of sorcery may be viewed in one light as socially integrative, so far as it acts as a cathartic for aggression, it may also be most disruptive of social cohesion, for it often aggravates tensions.* It would seem that shamanism and sorcery have become complementary to the central direction of social and economic change. The ecological accommodation to increased participation in rubber production calls for the dispersal of the population into ever smaller units in the vicinity of the stands of wild rubber trees. Correspondingly, sorcery conflicts tend to disintegrate larger village units while being integrative for factions within the village, which then commonly establish themselves as small local groups. This is not the only means by which social fission occurs. Latent conflicts that do not involve sorcery sometimes cause families and factions to leave villages; others leave because of the economic expediency of residence near their rubber avenues. But sorcery remains as a contributing motivation for the participants in the process. The Mundurucú example thus suggests that the institution of sorcery may promote the cohesion of a society as a whole, but only where other bases for such cohesion exist.

The close relationship of religion to the social structure can be seen quite as clearly in the context of change as in a synchronic dimension. As the society has become progressively divested of those mechanisms that integrated tribe and village, so also have group religious activities fallen into abeyance. What remains are the essentially individual practices of shamanism and sorcery. This is the same process noted for other parts of South America by Steward, and which he has phrased as part of a change in "level of sociocultural integration."* But beyond the scope of participation in religious activity we have seen another selective factor determining which segments of religion will persist. This, in brief, is the simple question of whether the element serves some social function in the changed setting. By this criterion, the warfare ceremonies have totally disappeared, and the ceremonies for the animal spirits have declined with the shift of a large part of the population from hunting to fishing. Similarly, the

* Kluckhohn (1944, p. 71) has noted the presence of disruptive elements in Navaho witchcraft also, although the analysis of these tendencies were beyond the scope of his treatise.
* Steward, 1952.